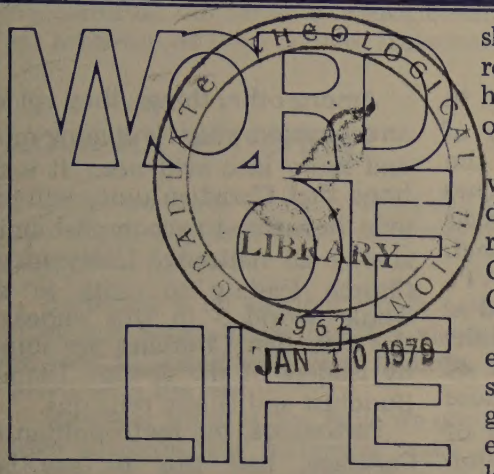
Living City

VOLUME 18, NO. 1

SUPPLEMENT



JANUARY 1979

**"... put your gifts
at the service of one another,
each in the measure
he has received."**

(1 Peter, 4, 10)

Pina, a young woman from Sardinia who has been blind from birth, lives in an institution for the blind. Recently, the chaplain became paralyzed and could no longer celebrate Mass. Because of this, it was decided that the Eucharist could no longer be kept in the chapel. When Pina heard this, she asked the Bishop to let them keep the Eucharist — the only light in their darkness — in that home. He granted her request, and also gave her permission to distribute Communion to the chaplain and other residents.

Pina wanted to help others and she also took on the responsibility of preparing a radio program which is broadcast a few hours every week. She uses this program to share with those who are suffering the best that she has to offer — advice, sound thinking, and the explanation of moral issues — in order to give them strength. I could tell you so much more about her. She is blind, but suffering has given her light.

I could give you so many other examples! There is goodness in the world which often goes unnoticed. Pina lives as a Christian; she knows that each one of us has received gifts from God and she has put hers at the service of others.

Yes, it is like this, because the word "gift" (or "charism" as it is derived from the Greek) does not refer only to those graces which God gives those who govern his Church.

Nor does it refer only to those extraordinary gifts which God sends directly to some for the good of all when it becomes necessary to solve a particular problem in the Church, or in times of serious danger — when the existing institutions are not sufficient. Those are the gifts like wisdom, knowledge, the power to work miracles, the gift of tongues, the charism to generate a new spirituality in the Church, and so on.

These are not the only gifts, or charisms which exist; there are other more ordinary ones possessed by many people which are noticed because of the good they bring others. The Holy Spirit is at work.

Furthermore, natural talents can also be considered gifts or charisms. Therefore, everyone is gifted; you, too.

How should you use these gifts? Try to make them bear fruit. They were not given to you for your own use alone, but, rather, for the good of all.

"...put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received" (1 Pt. 4,10).

There is a great variety of gifts. Each person has his or her own, and, therefore, each one also has a specific role to fulfill in the community.

Tell me something: what gifts do you have?

Do you have a degree? Did you ever think, for instance, of setting aside a few hours each week to teach those who need help, those who cannot afford to pay for their studies?

Are you a very generous person? Did you ever think of getting together with other people of good will in order to help the poor and outcast of society? By doing this, you could bring back to many hearts the true sense of man's dignity.

Do you have a knack for music, poetry or drama? Did you ever think of making more beautiful, interesting, and modern, your parish gatherings in order to do away with the idea that the liturgy is dull, outdated and somber?

Are you able to comfort others? Are you good at housekeeping, cooking, sewing clothes, or at doing crafts? Look around to see who might need your help.

It makes me suffer to hear people say that they are bored because they do not know how to use their free time. We Christians do not have free time - not as long as there are on this earth the sick, the hungry, the imprisoned, or the ignorant, the uncertain, the unhappy, the addicted, the handicapped, the orphaned, the widowed.

And think of prayer. It is such a powerful gift that we can use at any time since in each moment, we can turn to God who is present everywhere. In regard to prayer, I would like to remind you that, in January, a week is set aside during which Christians all over the world pray to God for perfect unity among Churches. You, too, should try to do your part.

"...put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received" (1 Pt. 4,10).

Can you imagine what the Church would be like if all Christians, children as well as adults, were to do everything possible to share with others the graces they have received?

Their mutual love would become consistent, abundant and so striking that non-Christians would recognize then the true disciples of Christ. Not only this: no longer could anyone doubt the divinity of Jesus.

If this is going to be the result, let's do all our part to achieve it.

Chiara Lubich

ECUMENISM

THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place this year from January 18th to the 25th. Its theme, which was chosen by the Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Council of Churches, is contained in these words of Peter the apostle, "*...put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received" (Peter 4:10-11).*

The choice of this theme proves once again that ecumenism is motivated by charity; it attains religious and social value inasmuch as it brings together all men of good will.

Ecumenism has already made great progress in creating a unity of hearts which will, in time, lead to unity of mind as well.

The deaths of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul I were sorrowful occasions for mankind. One might say that the death of these popes revealed how much their leadership had united all men. Because of their understanding of the needs of people everywhere, many had come to regard them as moral leaders in all issues concerning the welfare of man.

Their death, which caused such great sorrow, also had an ecumenical significance because it produced a bond of unity among people of various religions and ideologies, indeed even among people who profess no faith at all. People all over the world sensed that the Church can be "home" for all men.

This was due, in great part, to the apostolate of unity which is attempting to resolve a dilemna which is now confronting all men: "Unite or perish." In other words, "Choose either love or the neutron bomb, together with the slaughter of life caused by abortion; air, water, and food pollution; terrorism, wars and the like."

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will focus on themes related to these crises. In connection with the Week of Prayer, on August 7, 1978, the Ecumenical Council of Churches sent Cardinal Villot a message stating, among other things, that, "the fifteen years of Pope Paul VI's pontificate will be remembered as a decisive period in the life of the Roman Catholic Church and of all other Churches as well. Those years marked the foundation of a new and lasting communion among all Christian Churches... Pope Paul VI considered his ministry to be an instrument at the service of world peace..."

In the brief period of his pontificate, Pope John Paul I also brought mankind together in anticipation of a program of peace, goodwill and joy. Members of non-Catholic Churches, as well as those of non-Christian religions, expressed deep sorrow at his death. Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad, the second-highest authority of the Russian Orthodox Church, who died in the pope's arms had spoken amazing words of appreciation for the Church. Pope John Paul I later recalled, "I assure you that never in my life have I heard such beautiful words about the Church as those he told me. He was Orthodox, yet look how much he loved the Church! I believe that he has suffered very much for the Church and that he has done a great deal for the cause of unity."

As we can see from this, there are those who work for unity, who live for it and even die for it.

In the course of 1978, high-ranking prelates of the Orthodox and Anglican Churches, and also of other denominations, expressed great admiration for the Catholic Church.

Among other things, they voiced an aspiration which is coming more and more into evidence. It is the hope that Christian unity will provide the means to accomplish unity among all nations: Unity in the Church leading to unity in the whole world - in this endeavor the Christian Churches are joined by leaders of the Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu religions.

Parthenios, the metropolitan of Carthage, had this to say last March. "The dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church is the most important and the most substantial ever... it will have an effect on all other Churches...It does not call for fanaticism but, rather, for humility, charity, truth, and, most certainly, the prayers of all the faithful."

Also last March, the fourth meeting of the Commission of Catholic and Coptic Orthodox Churches took place in Cairo. Those present agreed to continue working for unity and to pursue common studies.

Since all who have been baptized have a responsibility for evangelization, in addition to the ecumenical gatherings of priests, ministers and theologians, there is also evolving an ecumenism of the common man. For example, the meetings of the Focolare Movement (especially the Mariapolis[1]) which are held in most countries of the world, are often attended by both ministers and lay people of many Christian Churches. This ends division, which is opposed to Christ and permits Christians to dwell together - even if only for a few days each year. This experience generates love, a love which then

1) The Mariapolises are summer gatherings of the Focolare Movement held every year for those interested in the Movement and those who wish to come in contact with it.

CHIARA LUBICH ANSWERS

We continue our series in which Chiara Lubich answers questions put to her by members of the different branches of the Focolare Movement.

Love for suffering?

I have read some of your books and what impressed me most is your view of suffering. One thing you do not specify is whether suffering is to be loved with our will or with our feelings. Could you clarify this point for me?

Suffering is an element which nature certainly does not love. Therefore it is almost impossible to love suffering with your feelings. Suffering is loved with the will.

However there is one fact: we christians do not love suffering for sufferings' sake, but we love suffering because in welcoming it we see an opportunity to follow Jesus who said 'If you want to follow me . . . take up your cross every day.'

We love suffering because of Jesus.

It is possible that christians who make a constant effort to love suffering with their will in order to follow Jesus and to help him — as St. Paul says, to fulfill his passion through us, will feel also a certain attraction to suffering, an attraction which moves the feelings.

This is certainly true of the saints. But the feeling is not directed towards suffering, it is love for the Man of sufferings: Jesus.

becomes mutual knowledge. The result is for someone a new understanding of the Gospel with Jesus and Mary, and a new respect for the Pope, for others the discovery of wisdom, unity and spiritual values existing in members of different religious denominations.

Many non-Catholics read the monthly commentary on the word of life, which is written by Chiara Lubich and published in many languages - from Hong Kong to Duala, from Beirut to Melbourne, from New York to Algiers, from Sao Paulo to Caracas...

In frequent meetings, both Catholics and non-Catholics seek out that which unites them and exclude everything which divides. They pray, talk and sing together. In this way (especially among the young people) dislikes disappear along with moral, social and ethnic divisions, giving way to friendship, which is a form of love.

Together they love God, he who is Love, the Father of all.

From its very beginnings, the Focolare Movement has been characterized by its ideal of unity. Members of the Movement immediately recognized the relevance of Jesus' last will, "That all may be one," which summarizes the whole Gospel.

Therefore, they spontaneously engaged in a kind of "spiritual ecumenism" with members of the Orthodox faith, Anglicans, Lutherans, those belonging to the Reformed Churches, etc., and this action was welcomed by leaders of many other Churches. It was praised by Metropolitan Emilianos (who represents the Patriarch of Istanbul at the Ecumenical Council of Churches) in a meeting held last Spring at the Mariapolis Center[2] in Rocca di Papa. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Orthodox Churches of Istanbul, Serbia, Rumania, Russia, Lebanon, Cyprus and of others in Europe and America.

Emilianos called that meeting "a miracle."

Another ecumenical meeting was held later that month (again at the Mariapolis Center in Rocca di Papa) for Anglicans coming from Great Britian.[3] After this meeting, Ronald Goodchild, the Anglican Bishop of Kensington (London), said, "We spent an absolutely marvellous week together..." He then added that, whereas other kinds of meetings are quite often unproductive, these gatherings are useful because, "...when we hold meetings regarding ministry, the Church and Our Lord, we must have him in our midst."

This concept of "Jesus in the midst," which is the incentive behind the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, is spreading within many non-Catholic Churches and bringing about unity of mind.

In conclusion, and in order to encourage all who read this to take part in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we wish to call attention to a document which reveals the interest of the Catholic Church in all religions and civilizations, even those farthest from us. It is Volume 13, Number 2 of "The Bulletin," published in Vatican City by the Secretariat for Non-Christians. It contains reports on recent studies of African religions and news of talks which took place in Kinshasa, a city in the Republic of the Congo.

These reports are truly interesting to read. They reveal an unknown world and bold ideas for

2) The Mariapolis Centers, which exist in many parts of the world, are training centers for those in the Movement.
3) See *"Living City"* Volume 17, Number 5, pp. 18-20, *"Ecumenical Meeting at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa."*

bringing together the numerous and very diverse African cultures, aiming at unity in an "African Christianity." "The Bulletin" also contains an in-depth examination of the Moslem petitions for justice and peace, bringing to light the many points which these two religious traditions hold in common and which had been obscured by their past political and racial struggles.

Let us close with the following words of our beloved pope, John Paul II, "We cannot forget our brothers of other churches and Christian denominations. In fact, the cause of ecumenism is too great and too delicate for us to neglect to speak of it. How many times have we meditated together on the last will of Christ, who asked his Father to grant the gift of unity to his disciples (Jn.17:21-23)? And who does not remember St. Paul's insistence on "common convictions" which lead to union in love "with a common purpose and a common mind" in imitation of Christ Jesus (Phil.2:2-3). It does not seem possible, therefore, that the spectacle of division among Christians still persists causing perplexity and perhaps even scandal. Therefore, we intend to continue along the path which has already been well-traveled and to promote those actions which tend to remove the obstacles which exist, so that, thanks to a common effort, we may finally achieve full unity."

On Sunday, October 22, 1978 — the very day which marked the beginning of Pope John Paul II's ministry — he received delegations from various churches including one from the Patriarchate of Constantinople and another from the Church of England, led by its primate, Archbishop Coggan.

Pope John Paul II shared with them his strong desire to overcome past divisions which have become "an intolerable scandal" impeding the cause of evangelization. He concluded with this words, "The commitment of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement, which was solemnly affirmed during the Second Vatican Council, is irreversible."

Igino Giordani

EXPERIENCES

Each month a "Word of Life" appears in Living City or in its Supplement. The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Word of Life.

The other day my brother arrived in Toronto with his wife and another couple. They had come to visit me, travelling across country. They were on the last leg of a tiring trip, and when he called, I knew that they would have liked a nice home cooked meal. So my friends whom I live with, and I immediately invited them over for supper. We prepared a menu and started getting things ready for the following day.

I thought that I could present a very special gourmet meal to my brother and his companions because I had learned how to make several special dishes.

The next day, when the phone rang and he invited me out to spend the afternoon, my friends immediately told me to go ahead and not worry about a thing, because they would take care of the dinner. I felt the generosity and depth of their love, in that they were ready to do anything for me in that moment.

I gladly accepted my brother's invitation and went out for the afternoon. Occasionally my mind returned to the gourmet dinner, but I put everything aside in order to love my brother in that moment. But when we got home, rather than finding an elaborate table, the meal was ready, but prepared much more simply than what I had imagined.

Would they like it?

In that moment I remembered the word of life. Did my brother mean more to me than Jesus? Jesus who had promised that he'd be present where two or more, with constant mutual love, were ready to die for one another. No. This was the very reason that my friends and I were together. A meal could not come between us. And I smiled broadly at my friends, introduced everyone all around, and we sat down. Dinner, and the hours flew by, later we sang songs and the atmosphere of family engulfed us all. My family left, having received much more than just an elaborate dinner.

E. G.

I work in an export department. The other day I came into work and they told me I had a special job for the day. My boss was going out of town, and needed a survey concerning 300 orders. I had to work with another girl who kept the files. She was very concerned that the job would be done on time. If I stopped for a minute to talk to someone she would always remind me to get going. I had to love this girl. If it were Jesus I would certainly do it. I finished by lunch, and that afternoon I thought I could relax and do something easy, but my boss came to me and told me that he would like a photocopy of each of these orders that I had surveyed. It was 3:30 in the afternoon and there was a line at the Xerox room. The

girl I was working with was telling me that I should clear everybody out of the Xerox room and get working. Again I remembered the "word of life", "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

I went ahead with the work trying to love all of the others there. It was getting late and everybody started to go home. I was staying overtime. I thought I would finish soon since I had the room all to myself, but it took longer than I thought. That evening I had to meet a friend I was going out with. I started watching the clock, but still I tried to remember that I was working for Jesus so I checked each of the copies carefully to see that they came out. Finally when I was done it was really late, I saw my boss standing outside the Xerox room talking to someone; I put the copies in order and dashed out. I apologized to him saying that I hoped that this wasn't the only thing that was keeping him late here. He started laughing, saying that he didn't even want to see them, his flight had been cancelled, and, I had two days to finish them if I needed it. I had been trying to love up to this time so I just laughed it off with him and put the papers at my desk.

Then it hit me how late I was; I had 15 minutes to do about 45 minutes worth of driving, with stops. The first stop was to pick up my little sister at her friend's house. She liked this friend and was contented to stay there all night if she could. When I got to the friend's house I had to hunt for her, she was out back up in a tree. At this point I was really late but it was very strong in me that everything I would do would be meaningless if I stopped loving. I helped her down and made sure she had all her things. When I got home I left the car running so I could dash right back out. Once in the house I discovered three phone messages that I had to answer before leaving. One was to the girl I was going to meet. I told her that I was kept late at work and was on my way. She understood. Then I left, without dinner.

I met my friend and we still made it on time for our appointment. The first thing there, we were offered something to eat. The atmosphere was warm, everyone tried to love us. I felt at peace, like nothing was lost that day.

M. A.

One very hot afternoon a few months ago I was doing my usual daily routine trying to live the present moment. After lunch and the children's nap time, I decided to take them out into the backyard to play in their little pool and on the swing. I took with me my basket of wash to fold. Outside, as I looked across the yard three of my neighbors had just jumped out of the pool and were having a nice glass of ice tea while chit-chatting.

Suddenly, I started to feel sorry for myself here in the heat, stuck with these little ones, unable to join my neighbors. Then the word of life came to me, "Renounce yourself...". I had new eyes and a new heart to look at my situation. It seemed so small and unimportant to be even thinking of relaxing, when I could take this opportunity to love Jesus in a small but special way. My "old man" disappeared in that moment and the children and I had a good afternoon.

J. S.

The other day I was late coming home from an appointment, and therefore, rather in a hurry, I had calculated the time very carefully, and determined that it would take me fifteen minutes. At the half way mark I was right on time, and breathed a little easier, thinking I'd make it before it got too late. Just then, but out of nowhere, the police stopped me.

I felt the impatience and a silent protest, "But I wasn't doing anything wrong!" swelling up inside, and then I remembered the word of life, "Turning his back on...his very self," and I quickly shot a smile at the officer and tried to love him.

"Just a routine check, Miss," he said, and I breathed a sign of relief. At least I wouldn't get a ticket. The routine check took more time, and my anxiety started to mount again, but I knew that I had to cut with everything and love in that present moment being ready to leave everything, all my good intentions and worries, in order to not let time become my guide but Jesus.

L. G.

RED RIVER

A river rose
And flooded in my window
A river red
It washed
My chairs and books away
And soaked my bed

I can no longer sit and read
I can no longer sleep
Or lay down my head
Except the damp reminder flows
Of where that red river rose
Under thorns and scourge, the day
That someone bled.

Father Julian Stead, O.S.B.

SO THIS IS WHAT I WANT

I come from New Zealand and I can truly say that my life has been an adventure, an adventure of love.

From the time I was very small I remember being struck by the love I saw, for instance, between a mother and child, between two sweethearts or two old people. The love they shared seemed to have something in common, something that could be called love with a capital L. To me this seemed to be the only thing worth living for, even though I didn't really understand what it was. I only understood that it was love and that it was the only thing that was really beautiful.

And then I met a fellow who told me, "That thing you like so much is called God." I said, "So this is what I want!" Immediately I threw myself into living for the Church. In fact I formed my own movement, my own group, in my home town because I had a burning desire to put love into everything. Pretty soon there were about a hundred and twenty of us young people. We used to take a piece of Gospel every week and try to put it into practice. I was sure this was the only way to live.

But soon I discovered that practically nobody really understood what I wanted to do. I remember, for example, that often someone in the group would want to organize various activities, but instead I felt that it wasn't the activity that counted; what was important was to do everything, no matter what, out of love. Eventually I just gave up and left the group.

I had to live for something so I threw myself into my job. I became a designer, then a rep., then a senior rep., and I had all those things that went with the job — an office, a car, a secretary etc. My job involved entertaining clients and one night this took me into a restaurant in my home town where I met a man who spoke to me of a God who is love. At first I thought he was a bit crazy, but as I got to know him I realized that he really based his life on this ideal, on God. He lived it and put it into practice even with many people against him at times. Sometimes he felt he had the whole world against him and yet he was still able to put into practice this beautiful ideal which I, too, felt deep down in my heart.

By this time I had drifted a long way from the Church. In fact now I never went to Church. But I kept going back to see that man because he lived what he talked about. My return to God was a long, slow process but all the time in my heart I was saying, "Maybe this is what I have been longing for." There was no Focolare Movement in New Zealand, there was no Mariapolis to go to; there was just this one man talking about Chiara Lubich and her experience. Then I decided to give it a go.

I was in the army at the time and I drove a truck. One night we went out on exercises. It was cold and wet and since we were preparing for a dawn attack we had to stay on top of a mountain all night. Many of the guys were fainting, keeling over with exhaustion and I had to take them back into the hospital. After the attack I took them back to the camp feeling really angry inside me because of what I'd seen. One fellow had hopped in the front beside me and I really let off steam with him. Just as well there was no officer around or I'd have ended up in prison for sure! Suddenly I remembered I had an apple hidden in the glove box of the truck — I was saving it for when there wasn't anything else to eat. I looked at the guy sitting next to me and I thought, "This poor guy hasn't eaten anything all night. He's been freezing cold and I really should give him that apple." I struggled with this thought for at least ten miles and finally I said, "Would you like an apple?" And I can tell you that apple came out of the glove box into his mouth so fast...! We got back to the camp and the first guy I let out of the back of the truck came round to the front and saluted the guy who'd been sitting beside me. So he was an officer! "Well here we go," I thought, "a week in prison coming up!" Instead he turned round, looked at me and said, "Thanks for the apple!" I never ever saw him again but I discovered inside me a peace and a joy that I had never experienced before. I was beginning to understand love, not only as a nice feeling but as something that really hurts sometimes because giving that apple was like giving my right arm at that moment.

Later on I tried to live like this in business, but after a while I realized that God was calling me, that he wanted more of me. I realized that what was stopping me was my job, because all my security was in my job and not in God. I had an office, a new car, a secretary, a future, everything you could want, but I felt that I had to be detached from all these things. I felt that God was asking me to leave all these things and once again it was a great struggle for

me. Eventually I found the strength to do it and I left for another city, where quite spontaneously a small group of people came together who wanted to live like I was trying to. It seemed that God really wanted me there. I took the first job that came up — answering the phone in a spare-parts warehouse. It was quite a change but nothing mattered any more. I felt free, free from myself, instead of living with that crippling pressure to get on, to sell more, etc. I felt that all I wanted to do was to love and nothing else which also meant doing my job as best I could.

Not long after I had been there, the boss confided to me that there were big financial problems facing the firm and that some people would have to be put off unless someone came up with a few good ideas. All along I had realized that there was something wrong with their marketing, but I didn't want to say anything because I didn't want to get back into that world I'd opted out of. Now, I felt that to be consistent I had to love not only my boss, but also all those people who might lose their jobs. I remember writing six or seven pages of suggestions and giving them to him the next morning. He followed my suggestions, increased my wages and later offered me the position of regional sales manager with a bigger car and a bigger office than before. But this time it was completely different. My job was no longer my ideal but God who is love who fills us with the hundredfold even on this earth.

One night I was back in the restaurant just talking with my friends when I picked up a book, "Stirrings of Unity," and I read a bit of it. It affected me so strongly that even though I was a serious businessman I danced all round the tables and leapt up and down. Everyone was looking at me as though I had gone crazy, but I had understood something so great I didn't care. "Better to choose the less perfect in unity with our brothers," I read, "than the more perfect in disunity with the others, because perfection does not consist in ideas or wisdom but in charity, in love. My human mentality told me that something is right if it's right, but now I understood that something is right if it's love. It didn't matter any more to prove that I was right. The only thing that was right was to love the person in front of me at that moment.

It was about this time I felt that God was calling me to leave everything, home, job, New Zealand, girlfriend. God wanted me to follow him completely in this life, in the focolare. At first I didn't think I had the courage, but then I realized that true freedom meant being able to say yes to whatever God asked of me. When the time came I found that I could leave everything and follow Him.

Terry Gunn

1979 MARIAPOLIS

Again this year there will be three Mariapolises!

NORTHWEST

Place: St. Martin's College
Lacey, Washington
Date: July 22 - evening
through
July 28 - morning

EAST COAST

Place: Alfred University
Alfred, New York
Date: August 12 - evening
through
August 18 - morning

SOUTHWEST

You will be informed about the Southwest Mariapolis as soon as the date and the location are known.

NOW AVAILABLE!

Everything Sings

a new album by the Gen Orange carrying 13 songs

The Gen Orange is one of the singing groups of the Gen Movement, the youth of the Focolare Movement.

Cost of 1 album: US$7.50

SPECIAL OFFER (valid until March 31, 1979):
on an order of 2 albums US$6.00 each
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SHIPPING AND HANDLING CHARGES:
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THE OLD LADY

Rather tired after a heavy day at the office and a very demanding meeting with a group of friends, I drop into Church to pay a visit on my way home. It's freezing cold and my feet are wet. It's hard to find an immediate relationship with God even if right at that moment some of the parishioners are reciting the psalms together.

The phrase from the Gospel we are living this month comes to mind, "The body is a unit made up of many parts," I ask myself if I have done my part today as a member of this body, which is the Church, which is the whole of humanity and I feel as though the the only thing I have to offer is my tiredness.

But as I sing with the others the words of the Our Father, "Thy will be done," I think, "Yes, that's the only thing I tried to do today — your will for me."

Your will . . . catching the same bus, day after day, trying to be aware of the others who are about to begin their day with me; receiving the Eucharist, then arriving punctually at work with a smile to start off the day (why should my office be a miserable place — it's the very place which offers me the chance, every day, to build my part of the new world); going on with yesterday's work, trying to do it carefully although knowing that no one will notice; being ready to respond to the needs of those around me — my boss, or my colleagues wanting help or advice with their work; making time to listen, trying to pour oil on troubled waters, being silent when necessary, being at peace, speaking up when the truth is at stake, and trying to maintain throughout the day my rhythm of work.

If it's really true that all I have to do is to be "inserted" in the Mystical Body" so that Christ can work through me, then my day, made up of innumerable, insignificant actions which could seem boring or meaningless, can become a day which is truly great.

I leave the Church with my feet colder than ever, about to hurry home. But an old lady stops me in the doorway, "Will you help me get down the stairs?" I forget about my coldness and I feel that it is Jesus I am leading down the stairs. "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, you do it unto me." Then there is the city square to cross, two traffic lights, the bridge. She can't hear very well but she keeps on repeating, "You are doing this as if you were walking with your own mother."

M. P.

WORD OF LIFE FOR FEBRUARY

"I am the vine,
you are the branches.
Whoever remains in me,
with me in him,
bears fruit in plenty;
for cut off from me
you can do nothing."

(John 15:5)

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